

Melpomene

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Melpomene

by [TheSilverQueen](#)

Summary

Il Mostro, Lord of Feasts and Master of Famines, Hunger of the Endless. Hannibal, I call you to me.

“Melpomene. Will,” Hannibal says, and he indulges himself, briefly, with one single caress of that beloved face. “You called to me.”

“You came.”

Or: When Will of the Muses is bound in service to a human, he calls to his husband, Hunger of the Endless, to save him.

Notes

This is my fic for [Reel Hannibal 2022](#) and was based off of The Sandman, specifically from the "A Dream of a Thousand Cats/Calliope" episode.

If you're unfamiliar with The Sandman, the very basic premise that I'm relying upon in my fic is that the universe has seven beings of power called The Endless, who represent fundamental aspects of existence. In The Sandman, they're things like Death and Destruction and Dream and Destiny. In my fic, I went with an H theme, so: Hunger, Hope, Harbinger, etc. There are also other mythical beings, such as the Greek Muses - in this fic, I have cast Will as Melpomene, the Muse of tragedy, both because the tragedy aspect was funny to me and because each Muse has some item they're generally drawn/sculpted with, and Melpomene has a knife.

Also, I cannot stress enough that I am NOT JOKING about the Dead Dove: Do Not Eat tag. I know cannibalism isn't unknown in Hannibal, but, like, yeah a character is gonna literally chew off her own arm. And another will eat her own leg. That will happen.

For those wondering about the Will/Miriam and Will/Kade tags, it's cuz they have sex with Will to use his powers. But don't worry . . . Will and Hannibal will have their revenge . . .

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Prologue

Chapter Summary

Miriam Lass, who wants to become a star in the FBI, visits the last rising star, Kade Prurnell, to ask for the secret of her success.

She is not expecting Kade to parade out a naked man.

Chapter Notes

WARNINGS: For noncon between Kade/Will and Miriam/Will. Also Will mutilates himself on Kade's order.

Prologue

Miriam gets the package on Wednesday. It is delivered while she is in class, taking an exam, so she doesn't see the notification until afterwards. Once she sees that, she promptly ditches her last two classes and goes straight home.

If the package is genuine, it'll totally worth having to beg for someone else's notes later, after all.

In her bedroom, she carefully cuts apart the tape and rope wound around the box. Then, because the box has a second box inside of it, she cuts through that round of tape as well before, at last, she is able to lay eyes upon her prize.

It doesn't look like much. To anyone else, it might look like just a book.

Miriam flips through a page or two with shaking hands. Only a few, no more, lest the sweat from her palms stain the pages.

Then she picks up her phone. *I have a gift for you*, she texts.

A few minutes later, she gets a reply: *So do I. Saturday brunch? My treat.*

Miriam looks at her calendar. She'll have to wait three whole days – that's far too long. Fortunately, however, this semester she managed to set her schedule so that she has a light class load on Fridays.

Friday dinner, she texts back.

6PM. Don't be late.

Miriam blows out a long breath. "Two days," she tells herself, giddy with anticipation. "Two days!"

Two days until she can start becoming the next Kade Prurnell, star of the FBI.

Thursday passes with agonizing slowness, and Friday morning is even slower. Miriam barely takes notes and doesn't participate in class, which means her professors give her strange looks, but she placates them with stories of a headache and a few all-nighters. It's important, she knows, to leave a good impression.

And besides, even a rising star has to take breaks sometimes. It'll make for a better story when reporters or biographers ask about her beginnings.

Friday night, at exactly six on the dot, she knocks on Kade Prurnell's door. She's been over enough to learn the exact time it takes to drive out of the city, park at the end of the enormous driveway, and walk up the mansion pathway, and it serves her now so that she is able to land on the doorstep perfectly on time.

Kade opens the door, dressed in a form fitting and beautiful suit, as always. "Ah, Miriam. Do you have it?"

"Yes, ma'am," Miriam says politely.

"Good girl, come in."

Kade leads her straight into her study. It's a beautiful study, adorned with many mementos of Kade's travels. The shelves are filled with books she's written or co-authored, and there's even an entire section dedicated to novels inspired by her. And, of course, the walls are covered with the many accolades that she's earned over the years. There's a reason Miriam chose to pursue the perfect star of the FBI, after all.

"Let's see it," Kade says, after she's put on gloves and switched on a light.

Miriam hands over the book gently. Kade does the same thing Miriam did – examine the spine, flip through a few pages, look closely at the handwriting style. Then she gets a magnifying glass and really starts to carefully read, and while her face doesn't change, her eyes light up completely with glee.

Miriam has never seen that kind of emotion from Kade, ever. It's a little bit frightening, actually.

Finally, Kade puts down her magnifying glass. "Absolutely beautiful," she breathes. "A genuine notebook from the Chesapeake Ripper. I didn't think you could find it, to be honest."

Miriam musters up a smile. "I'm very motivated."

“Oh, I knew that. It takes guts to bully your way into my house after I’ve specifically said I won’t be doing interviews. But this – this takes careful investigation and good perseverance. Good traits in someone who wants to be an FBI agent.”

“Thank you, I – ”

“I mean, just look at this handwriting. Gorgeous cursive. Especially for a doctor. And these equations are beautiful, even if I have no idea what he was solving for.”

“Who knows,” Miriam shrugs. “Maybe he was trying to time travel.”

Kade gives her a narrow eyed look. “Sarcasm. All right, I get it. You’ve delivered, and now it’s my turn, right?”

Better agents than Miriam have crumbled under that look. Even killers have fallen to pieces under the ferocious stare of the Ice Queen herself. Despite her astronomical success rate, she’s taken no trainees under her wing, ever, because she said they were all too faint of heart.

Miriam raises her chin and squares her shoulder. She is Miriam Lass, after all, and she’s going to make sure the whole world knows it.

Kade studies her for a few moments. Then a smile creeps across her face. “That’s the spine,” she says approvingly. “Very well. Dinner is on the table in the dining room; you know the way, so help yourself. I’ll be along in a few minutes with your gift.”

The dining room isn’t that far from the study. Miriam has only been there a few times, since Kade prefers to eat on her own, but she remembers the way all the same. And just as Kade promised, a sumptuous dinner is laid out on the table: roast duck, braised ribs, caprese salad, salmon crostini, prosciutto tarts, and so much more. It’s a meal fit for a queen – and definitely beyond what a college student on a stipend and scholarship can afford.

Miriam loads up a plate.

She’s just about to take her first bite of that divine roast duck when Kade strides in dramatically, heels clicking on the stone floor. She looks smug and proud, a runway star on her own private carpet, and the only weird thing is that she is holding some sort of rope in her right hand.

A rope, Miriam quickly realizes, that is attached by a collar to a man.

A very naked man.

“Kade, what – ”

“Miriam, this is Melpomene,” Kade interrupts. She takes her seat at the head of the table, fingers still firmly clenched around the leash. “Or, as he called himself while working with humans, Will.”

“Kade, I don’t – ”

“He’s a Muse,” Kade continues, ignoring her as easily. “A child of Zeus, actually, and a minor god in his own right. Will is known for his dominion over the arena of tragedy. Tragic poetry, actually, but all tragedy is known to him.” She smiles sweetly at Miriam. “You did want to know my secret, right? How I caught so many killers so quickly? How I got into the minds of so many twisted men and women? How I rose so fast? Well – dear Melpomene is how.”

Miriam looks at the man. Will looks like just an ordinary man – soft brown curls, pale skin, a thin scar across his abdomen. Aside from the fact that he’s completely naked and glaring at Kade like he wants to rip her head off, he could be anyone.

“Don’t be fooled by his appearance,” Kade says casually, like she knows exactly what is going through Miriam’s mind. “He’s a vicious little thing. Damn near cracked my head in half while I was binding him.”

“Binding?” Miriam echoes.

Kade gestures at the collar with her right hand. The movement pulls on Will’s collar, and he staggers but remains stubbornly upright.

“Muses are governed by certain laws,” Kade explains. “Normally, they’re free to roam as they please, blessing those they like and ignoring those they do not. Will here was fishing in a stream when I found him, but he had left his knife and his scroll on the shore. And if you burn a Muse’s scroll, well. What happens then, Will?”

Will works his jaw for a few moments. Then, sounding as if the words are being dragged out of him, he says, “Then the Muse is bound to the maker of ashes.”

His voice is – it’s like listening to church bells, or birds singing, or ocean waves. Beautiful and alluring and utterly out of this world. Miriam finds herself leaning towards him without even thinking about it.

Kade smiles. It’s a self-satisfied smile, a cat that’s caught the mouse. “Will helped catch the Chesapeake Ripper – did you know that, Miriam? He wandered straight into the Bureau and gave us so many helpful tips. Without him, the Ripper would still be out there, killing innocent people. And so I thought – why, if he’s so good at getting into killers’ minds, surely he would make an excellent assistant to an FBI agent. So I approached him.”

An ugly expression ripples across Kade’s face then. Anger, perhaps.

No, Miriam realizes. Not anger.

Fury.

Kade slowly starts winding the leash around her hand, over and over, so that it shortens. Will resists, but eventually he is forced to move closer to her, head bent down as if in submission, bowing to her power.

“He laughed at me,” Kade whispers, and it’s as if she’s forgotten Miriam is there altogether, lost in her memory. “Mocked me. Humiliated me. Said no Muse would ever lower themselves to work with a – a, well. So I did a little research, and I found him relaxing in a stream, and I *made* him obey until he had a taste of the humiliation he had given me.”

From the pure hatred on Will’s face, Miriam can well believe it.

But still: “A Muse? Zeus? Are you sure this Greek mythology thing isn’t . . . just a bit too far?” Miriam asks skeptically.

Kade laughs, and the tension in the room is broken. She leans back in her chair, a cruel smile on her face, and says, “Yes, I thought you might not believe me. Let’s show you then, shall we? Will does so love showing what he can do, don’t you?”

Will bears his teeth.

“Don’t you, Will?” Kade repeats, yanking on the leash.

“ . . . Yes.”

“Good boy,” Kade says mockingly. She picks up the steak knife next to her plate and twirls it a few times, so that the light catches the blade. “Will, cut off your ear.”

And before Miriam can protest, Will picks up the knife, pushes back his hair, and *saws off his ear*.

Blood splatters onto the table like drops of wine. The air fills with the scent of fresh blood. Yet Will makes not a single sound – not even a whimper. He keeps his gaze fixed on Kade as he pulls away his now severed ear and holds it out on his palm.

Miriam says, “Kade, what the *hell*?”

“Oh, he’ll be fine,” Kade says dismissively. “He’s a Muse. Look, it’s already healing.”

Miriam looks back at Will. She can feel her heart racing from the adrenaline, and her fingers are trembling around her own knife. It’s not every day that she sees someone mutilate themselves in perfect silence.

But sure enough, when Will tilts his head at Miriam, his ear is there again, perfect and unblemished, aside from the blood on the edge.

Miriam looks at the ear in Will’s hand, and then at his ear on his head, and then back to the ear in his hand again. It’s . . . impossible.

And yet, she saw it with her own eyes.

When she turns to Kade, Kade still has that cruel smile in place. “Now, that you see that he isn’t human, let me give you a taste of his power. Google a murder, Miriam. Any murder. A recent one, something I couldn’t possibly have looked up beforehand.”

Miriam fumbles for her phone. A few clicks on Google brings up the list of recent murders – Miriam expands the parameters beyond her normal area to encompass the entire eastern seaboard and scrolls for a bit before picking one at random. It's nothing special, just a man shot outside a bar, although he was shot four times, one in each limb. The information in the article is sparse and fresh; no way for Kade to have looked it up before Miriam did, since it's only a few hours old.

"Read me the details on the crime scene," Kade says. She shifts in her chair. "Will, down. You know what to do."

Will flashes her another hateful look, and then he drops to his knees and crawls under the table. Miriam hears the soft sound of cloth moving – and then, as Kade slumps back in her chair with a long sigh, the sound of wet licks.

"Read me the case," Kade reminds her, distracting her from the realization of exactly what Will is doing.

"Um, yes, uh, okay. Thirty year old victim, shot four times, one to each limb – "

"Where?"

"Hands and feet."

"Palms?"

"Yes."

"Point blank range?"

"Um – yes, how did you know?"

Kade slumps a little further in her chair. She closes her eyes, and her entire face changes. Miriam wouldn't call it softening, not really. It's more like she's slipping into a trance, body going lax not in relaxation but readiness.

The next time Kade speaks, her voice has the same quality as Will's: ocean waves and birds singing, ancient and powerful.

"I am angry that this man touched what was mine. He touched with his own two hands, and so he should lose those two hands. He walked all over the house that I built, so he should lose those two feet. I know that he goes drinking, and so I lie in wait for him afterwards. He will be drunk, but not so drunk that he does not know it is me, and he will understand who delivers his reckoning. This is my design."

Kade's voice dies away. Her head lolls backwards and her chest tightens; Will makes a noise, one that is disgruntled and muffled.

The licking sounds stop, abruptly, and Kade's entire body relaxes.

Miriam blushes and looks down at her plate. She pushes the roast duck and fragrant greens, trying to ignore the sound of Will crawling back from under the table and Kade sighing in contentment as she recovers from orgasming.

“See, Miriam?” Kade slurs. “A tragedy, and Will knew how to see through it, how to read the scene, how to know the killer’s design. All of that, he shared with me – and he can share with you.”

Will’s mouth is shiny when he stands back up, smeared with fluids. He makes no move to wipe his mouth clean.

“Ah,” Kade says, catching where her eyes are going. “Normally I don’t just solve one case, you know? A few at a time gets you in the rhythm, makes it easier to see the answer. So he isn’t allowed to clean himself until I’m finished with him. Plus, it reminds him of his place.”

“And, uh, is that the only way to – ”

“Oh, no, he’ll do anything you wish him to. Sometimes I just lay back and let him do all the work; sometimes I straddle him until a normal man might die from lack of oxygen. And if you’d like him to take you, he will, and it’ll be the best lay you’ve ever had, trust me. I know from experience. But he’s quite sturdy; he can take a lot. Plus he’s easy on the eyes, right?”

Miriam allows herself a second gaze. There’s no need to feel it’s wrong, because while it would be wrong on a human, Will is not human.

Will is indeed beautiful. Thick thighs, strong chest, sweet mouth. If he was in a bar, she’d hit that.

And if Will can also help her become a star in the FBI . . .

Miriam takes a deep breath and turns to Kade. “And you’re sure about giving him up? He’s valuable, I can see that.”

“All valuables have their time and place,” Kade replies. “I’m retired, Miriam. There’s no need for me to chase killers anymore. It’s time for me to take it slow – write some more books, give some lectures, maybe take up a hobby or two. Always wanted to learn how to raise a bonsai. And there’s no point in him just sitting here gathering dust. You seem like a smart girl; at least I know you’ll actually do something useful with him.”

“But – ”

“Come here, Miriam.”

And there it is, the commanding and undeniable voice of the Ice Queen. Miriam pushes out her chair and walks over to Kade.

Kade passes her the leash, slowly and reverently, with a ceremonial air. Miriam feels rather like she’s receiving a precious crown instead a slightly tattered old leash.

“I, Kade Prurnell, give Melpomene to you, Miriam Lass,” Kade intones gravely. Then she winks. “Use him well. My study’s open, if you want to give him a ride.”

Will says nothing when Miriam brings him to the study. It’s kind of frightening, actually, how a person can walk so silently, without so much as a hint of feet on the stone floor or breath from an expanding chest.

Of course, Will isn’t a person. He’s a Muse.

The door shuts behind them with a strange finality. Miriam swallows hard and looks up into Will’s eyes. They’re blue, like the sky, and they sparkle as if they, too, contain stars. Miriam feels a yawning sense of dread when she stares into them, as if there’s a danger of looking too long and losing oneself.

“Right,” Miriam tells herself, breaking eye contact. “Test ride. That’s what we’re doing here. Testing. Will?”

Will blinks. It’s the only sign he’s registered anything.

“My name is Miriam. You’re bound to me now. Do you understand that?”

Silence.

“I said, do you understand that?” she repeats.

Still, Will says nothing.

Miriam grips the leash harder. Now she thinks she can see why Kade kept him on such a tight leash. She yanks the leash with all of her strength, and is gratified to see how Will is pulled off balance, stumbling until he can regain his footing.

“I said, do you understand that you belong to me, Will?” she repeats again.

“Yes,” Will says, almost too low to hear.

A rush of pleasure fills Miriam when he speaks. It’s intoxicating, knowing that such a powerful creature is hers to command – and that he can make her the star she’s always wanted to be.

Miriam sits on the couch, leash still firmly in hand, and spreads her legs.

“Down,” she commands. “You know what to do.”

Slowly, so slowly, Will drops to his knees. He crawls to her, a deep hatred in his eyes, and unzips her pants with remarkably steady hands. It’s immensely satisfying to do nothing as he works her pants and panties down.

The first lick is pleasure, rippling through her spine. The second is joy, filling every crevice of her body.

The third, though. The third is revelation.

Miriam clutches at Will's curls, leans her head back, and thinks of the Cello Killer case.

“Jack. Jack!”

“Miriam, it is 11PM, why the hell are you –”

“I know who the Cello Killer is!”

Melpomene

Chapter Summary

Will calls to his husband, Hunger of the Endless, for salvation.

Chapter Notes

WARNINGS: For noncon between Miriam/Will and Miriam chowing down on her own hand. Also the tiniest, tiniest reference to mpreg at the end.

Hannibal gets the call a day after he walks free of the Vergers.

The call itself is not unexpected. Quite a few beings have called upon Hannibal; after all, being trapped for decades, powerless and cut off from his realm, means that he's accumulated a lot of business that he needs to attend to. His very palace lies in ruins, for example, and it is both the throne and the expression of his power. On top of that, his Feasts and Famines have been running amok in his absence, and they too will need to be recalled and brought back into line.

Of course, Hannibal has all the time in the world to do that. He isn't worried. So he accepts calls from the sincere (his favorite siblings, Harbinger and Hope) and the nosy (his followers who think too highly of themselves, Freddie and Frederick) and the greedy (his rivals who think themselves too proud to be rivals, Lucifer and Titania). He organizes his remaining Feasts and Famines to scour the earth and other realms for their siblings.

And then, as he settles onto the skull at the center of his palace and begins the lengthy process of rebuilding, he feels it.

Il Mostro, Lord of Feasts and Master of Famines, Hannibal, I call you to me.

There are rules, when beings of power call to each other. Hannibal has a gallery in his palace that was the first thing he restored, and it contains seven sacred objects and seven sacred altars. He also has an entire wing in his palace, filled top to bottom with doors, each hiding a different location from which unique rituals may be performed. A name is often not enough to summon a being of true power – one needs a sigil or a talisman, usually, and on top of that the perfect conditions ripe for coaxing a god forth to walk upon the earth.

Of course: names have their own power as well.

And only one being in all of creation would dare to call him – Hunger of the Endless, Lord of Feasts and Master of Famines, God of Starvation and Satiation – with such a familiar name as *Hannibal*.

Hannibal smiles and rises to his feet. “Chiyoh.”

“Yes, my lord?”

“I’ve been called to the mortal realm.”

Chiyoh’s face does not change. She’s the sturdiest of all of his creations, his loyal and faithful servant, who of all of the Feasts and Famines never even thought about abandoning the palace when he failed to return.

That being said, loyalty from one such as her does not mean unquestioning obedience.

“That last time you answered a call, you were locked away,” Chiyoh notes carefully. “Bound in chains, branded with magic, stripped of your power.”

“Yes, I was.”

“The palace has not yet recovered from your absence. Nor have all of my siblings returned.”

“Yes, that is true.”

“And yet you will go anyways.”

Hannibal shrugs. “Verger and his followers cannot trap me again, for they have not the wits to do anything besides stuff their mouths with anything they can find. All books and drawings of the rituals to trap an Endless were destroyed. I see no danger in following this call.”

“With Melpomene, there is always danger. Violence is his language.”

“Tragedy is his language,” Hannibal corrects. “It is not his fault that generally tragedy for one of the Endless means violence.”

“My lord – ”

“Conduct a census, if you please. I want an accurate report of who has returned and who has not.”

Chiyoh purses her lips. She disapproves – but that is hardly unusual. She has disapproved of Will since they first met, and will likely continue disapproving of him until the sun burns out and the Endless find a new place to call home.

Hannibal turns away from her. Regardless of her feelings on the matter, she will conduct business as it should be, and that is all that matters.

He retrieves his pouch and tips the opening to the floor. Blood – steaming and coppery and ruby red – flows to the floor, pooling on the ground in a perfect circle. He steps into the circle and reaches for the mortal realm, closing his eyes as he seeks the perfect avenue forward.

A girl, dreaming of an island of ice cream.

A man, daydreaming of a weekend of wild, adventurous, energetic sex.

A demon, licking its chops in anticipation as two souls fall under its sway.

And then Hannibal alights onto gardener, brushing dirt over a newly fertilized mushroom patch, hungering for the perfect meal, and steps forth into the mortal realm.

The first time Hannibal had beheld Will, he had met the Muse at a seedy little motel in the middle of nowhere. Hannibal had come to send a Famine upon a man hungering for fame; Melpomene had, apparently, answered a prayer for tragic inspiration. Hannibal had been dressed in his finest suit, befitting one of the Endless. Melpomene had been wearing . . . rather less befitting clothes: a plaid shirt, instead of a flowing gown; scuffed sneakers, as opposed to braided sandals; smudged glasses, suitable only for discarding.

Now, though, when Hannibal steps into the freshly churned garden and from thence into the small room where the call came from, he finds Will – his lovely, beautiful, fierce Will – naked in the moonlight.

The decades have not been kind to him. Hannibal spies a jagged scar across his abdomen, and his skin is pale, too pale, as if he hasn't seen the sun in all the years they've been apart, and his hair is mussed as if someone has clutched it too hard.

And there is a collar around his beloved's neck, secured by a chain to a bolt in the wall.

Will turns to him. "Hunger," he says, and here, at least, he has not changed. He still has the alluring voice Hannibal fell in love with, and temping thighs, and captivating eyes.

Still, the deliberate choice of title stings.

"Melpomene," Hannibal replies.

Will's lips quirk. He steps forward, away from the window, and the moonlight bathes him from shoulder to foot, only adding to the mystical allure that only a Muse can summon.

"Hannibal," he says, softer, gentler.

"Will," Hannibal says, meeting him halfway in tone, and he indulges himself, briefly, with one single caress of that beloved face. "You called to me."

"You came."

There is something in Will's voice, there. A thread of instability, Hannibal might call it; but also unshakeable pride and unquenchable hunger. For all that his beloved has been brought low by humans, he at least has retained this part of himself, and Hannibal is glad to hear it.

“Did you think I would not?” Hannibal asks.

Will shifts, moving his weight from foot to foot, restless. Even among the Muses, Will had been flighty. “Well,” he says dryly, “I did help Mason Verger capture you.”

Hannibal rolls his shoulders. The brand is long gone, but he can still feel it, in his memory – the burning as the magic settled into his bones, the hiss of flesh and blood as the brand tied him to the mortal plane, the ache in his limbs as his power fled. It had not been a pleasant experience, and even less so when he had looked up and seen Will – plaid and sneakers and smudged glasses – standing like a statue at Mason’s side, cold and unmoved at his pain.

Still: “I understand why you did it. And it appears I was not alone in my imprisonment.”

“I showed my hand too openly,” Will admits, flicking his gaze to the side, as if embarrassed. “Prurnell guessed that I was not human, and I gave her just enough for her to learn the old ways. She bound me.”

“She did more than that,” Hannibal says. He touches his beloved’s lips with a finger – just a moment, nothing more, and yet when he sniffs his finger, he can smell years and years of torment. “How many times has she forced herself upon you?”

“It matters not. My suffering was nothing compared to yours.”

“Mason Verger was an animal,” Hannibal acknowledges. “And he enjoyed doling out pain. But that was pain of the flesh, and I endured, and I healed. What they have taken from you . . .”

After all, Verger had wanted nothing more than a spectacle. He’d wanted to see an eternal being bleed; he’d applauded to see a member of the Endless burn. But he had had no desire for Hannibal’s power. He had just wanted suffering.

Will’s tormenters, on the other hand . . .

“I am glad you are free,” Will says. He means it – Hannibal can hear it in his voice, see it in his eyes, sense it in the air. His strange, vicious beloved, who with one hand bound him in fiery chains and in the other petted his hair. “Even if it took you longer than I expected.”

Hannibal lets the insult pass. They’ve said worse to each other, after all, and Hannibal did take a rather long time to break himself free.

He takes Will’s hand, caressing the skin, and is distressed at the scents of other humans layering over Will’s lovely scent. He looks to Will’s collar, plain leather, but it is sturdy and unchanged even after so many years. More than just for show, then.

“You are bound here by the laws,” Hannibal realizes.

Will dips his head in a nod. “Prurnell. She burnt my scroll and shed my blood with my own knife.”

“This does not smell like Prurnell.”

“No. The newer scents belong to a girl named Miriam Lass. Prurnell sold me to her.”

A snarl erupts out of Hannibal’s chest. To bind a being of power is already a grave trespass; to think to *sell* one as a common object is insult beyond compare. “You are no teacup, to be bartered and traded away,” Hannibal says. “Have they no respect for what you are?”

“If they did, that respect fled the moment they realized I had to obey their every command.” Will sighs. “You cannot free me, Hannibal. Only Lass can do that, now.”

The house they are currently standing in is empty. Hannibal can feel no one and nothing in it besides themselves. Still, he has a name. That is enough to find whoever this Miriam Lass in.

And enough to make her regret it.

“I had hoped,” Will continues, soft and coaxing like a gentle river, “that you might . . . direct her hunger towards setting me free.”

From anyone else, such a request would have been met with refusal. Hannibal is of the Endless; they are not servants to be commanded, nor weapons to be aimed at a target, nor books awaiting any being to pick up a quill and start scribbling. He goes where he wants and strikes as he pleases and leaves when he gets bored. Few things can compel him to purposefully unleash his power, and even fewer can ask that of him.

For Will, Hannibal would do anything.

He kisses his beloved’s hand. “I will do all that,” he promises, “and more. For she must be punished.”

Will snorts. “I don’t know any punishment that would be enough,” he says bitterly. “I had no scars, before they bound me.”

Hannibal presses his free hand to the jagged line on Will’s abdomen. The violence there is unmistakable, but when he reaches out with his power, he sees no human wielding the knife. No, it is Will himself, tears bleeding from his eyes as he digs at his own flesh, reopening the wound again and again under Prurnell’s command until she is satisfied that he is truly not a human.

In a way, it makes sense. Even bound, Will retains some autonomy; he can scratch, he can kick, he can bite. He would never have let a human harm him.

But Hannibal does not care about what makes sense. All he cares about is that a human hurt his Will.

“You doubt my creativity?” he asks Will. “You think I cannot find a way to punish them?”

“I think you’re dreaming of a way to kill them,” Will points out. “And I do not want them dead.”

“Will, for this trespass, they must die.”

“Their deaths would not bring back what they took from me.”

“Then what would you ask of me? I cannot allow them to go free.”

“Why? Because I was once yours?”

Hannibal lowers himself to his knees. It’s an unfamiliar position, but not entirely unknown. He bowed to Will when he asked to court him, and he bowed again at their wedding, and he bowed for a third time when Will bore their precious child. After all, even the Endless know when it is right and proper to pay homage.

“No, my beloved,” Hannibal whispers, kissing that jagged scar and wishing he had the power to smooth it away. “Because they bound you, and hurt you, and forced you to come to heel. For that, they must answer, and as you cannot hurt them, I will see justice done in your name.”

Will is silent for a long moment. Then he says: “The last time I saw you, I said I would never speak to you again.”

“I remember.”

Will kneels down then too, so that they are on equal ground. The movement pulls at his neck, but he persists, clasping Hannibal’s hands tightly in his, his eyes gleaming with unspoken emotion.

Will whispers, “*I lied.*”

And Hannibal had known that, deep in his heart of hearts. They had bound themselves together, blood and flesh and soul, and such a binding is not easily broken. Yet sometimes, in the darkness of Verger’s prison, limbs aching and blood dripping and flesh burning, Hannibal had sometimes wondered if Will had brought tragedy upon him as well as betrayal. True tragedy, such that ends even beings as powerful as one of the Endless.

It is a relief to know that is not so.

Hannibal leans forward and kisses Will, pouring his relief and his joy and his love into the movement, and Will responds with equal fervor. Hannibal kisses away the taste of human women, the stench of their trespass, the unshed tears of the humiliation they have wrought, until all he can sense is Will – his darling Muse, his fierce inspiration, his savage and tragic Melpomene.

“Let me seek justice for you,” Hannibal tells him. “This much, at least, let me do for you.”

“What will you do to her?”

Hannibal smiles. “I will let her taste hunger, and see what she consumes.”

Hannibal stages the confrontation with Miriam Lass in the kitchen. It is the most fitting place, after all, and he can find some comfort in the ritual of tenderizing meat and chopping

vegetables. It's important to put his presentable human mask back together, and normally he would have no issue with that, but Will has always been so skilled at peeling it back.

Hannibal has missed him dearly.

By the time Miriam has returned, chucking her keys into the bowl by the door and kicking off her shoes into the closet, the sweetbread is almost ready.

"What the hell," Miriam says, skidding to a stop when she comes into the kitchen. "Who the f— get the hell out of my house!"

She doesn't look like much, Hannibal notes. Slender little thing, with hair pulled into a ponytail and a wrinkled suit. He could probably lift her with one hand and squeeze the life out of her in seconds as she gasped and begged.

But that is not what Hannibal has planned for her, so he resists the temptation. He blots the last of the sweetbread, keeping his expression open and amiable.

"Now, now, Miss Lass," he chides, "is that any way to greet someone who has prepared dinner for you?"

Lass raises her chin, steeling herself. In a way, she has a little bit of Will's defiance.

Unfortunately for her, Hannibal is not amused at the thought of her having gained such pride and steel at Will's expense.

"It's Agent Lass," she corrects him coldly. "And if you don't take off my apron and get out of my house, I'm going to call the police. You do realize I'm an officer of the law, right?"

"Why do you think I've cooked such a large meal? Law is such a taxing profession; it consumes so many calories, does it not?" Hannibal plates the sweetbread and pushes it across the table. "Fried sweetbreads, soaked in milk and boiled in oil. An excellent dose of protein to keep you at your crime fighting best."

"Are you serious – look, do you even know who I am?"

Lass's tone is full of self-righteousness and importance. It makes sense; in the five years that she has tortured Will, she has become the rising star of the FBI, lauded with accolades and awarded with medals and heaped with praise. No doubt few are willing to play the role of keeping her firmly and humbly grounded.

Hannibal smiles. "I know precisely who and what you are, Miriam Lass. I know that you have the highest closure rate in your agency. I know that you've caught more killers than most of your graduating class combined. I know that you've got an eye for the top seat. And I know that you've taken all of this glory and deserved none of it."

Rage suffuses Miriam's face. "How dare you," she starts.

"Because," Hannibal continues, "all of this work you've done has been at the expense of the man you've been keeping here against his will."

To her credit, Miriam doesn't even flinch. Her face remains indignant and not at all alarmed; she has a good mask of her own, it seems. "There's no man here. I live alone, thank you."

"You've built a fine life for yourself. Expensive house, expensive car, expensive wines. Trips across the world, first class flights to give lectures, photo ops with the rich and famous. All of it from the torment and torture you've inflicted upon my dear Will."

"I – "

"You have held him captive for over sixty years," Hannibal says. "You have abused him, demeaned him, defiled him. Not an inch of his skin have you spared from your touch and your greed. I wonder what your superiors would think of that."

"Because I needed him!" Miriam snaps, finally breaking. "There were so many killers that needed to be brought to justice, and he wanted us to just *pray* and *hope* he would answer us? So many women and children and men dying for nothing, when he could show us how to catch their killers in an instant? I think my superiors would applaud my resourcefulness."

"Resourcefulness."

"And furthermore," she rants, "I've treated Will very well! He can do whatever he wants, eat whatever he wants, sleep whenever he wants. I've never caused him to hurt himself."

Hannibal lets that declaration sit in the air between them. He rolls a knife between his fingers, because it's that or reach across the table and choke her until the life bleeds from her and his dear Harbinger comes to collect her due.

Finally, he says, "It's interesting that you say that. A Muse needs certain things, Miss Lass, did you know that? Calliope has her crown, Euterpe her flute, Erato her torch. You have deprived Will of his knife. You have deprived him of the sun, of the wind, of the earth. You have deprived him of company of his sisters, of the songs of his cousins, of the dances of his nymphs. You have not even given Will clothing – all you have done, as far as I can tell, is chain him to a tiny room, and lock the door, and, once every few days, force him to service you against his will because *you* desire fame."

Miriam shrieks in rage and charges at him. It's not surprising; the Endless provoke strong emotions, even when they aren't trying to, and Hannibal is very much trying to. So he is prepared for her attack.

Hannibal sidesteps her first blow, blocks her second, and then twirls around to get her in a headlock during the third.

She struggles, but she is trapped against him, her heaving back to his chest, her panicked fingers clawing at his arm, her legs feebly kicking as he lifts her up. There is no way out for her, and she knows it, yet she struggles all the same. On anyone else, Hannibal might admire her determination.

"Who the hell are you?" Miriam wheezes. "Why do you even care?"

And Hannibal lowers his mouth to her ear and purrs, “Why, I am Hunger of the Endless, Lord of Feasts and Master of Famines. And the man you have trapped upstairs is my Will, my beloved, my husband. And the mother of our daughter.”

Miriam falters. “I didn’t – I didn’t know Will had a daughter.”

“You know nothing,” Hannibal says, “of Will. But it is too late to let any of that concern you now. For you have hurt my beloved, and I have come to seek justice in his name. So, Miss Lass: you have tasted the power of a Muse. Now taste the power of the Endless. Let’s see what hunger does to you.”

And then he lets her go.

Miriam slumps to the ground, coughing and spluttering, rubbing at her throat. She’ll bruise, for sure, but Hannibal made sure that that was the only injury she would suffer. He wants her fighting fit for what comes next.

“You aren’t – aren’t going to kill me?”

“No,” Hannibal answers. “Only you can free Will, after all.”

“But I need him, he’s – he’s helping me to save lives!”

“Why should I care about the lives he saves? I care about his life, Miss Lass. That’s my purview as his husband.”

Miriam’s face hardens. Slowly, she pushes herself to her feet, straightening her shirt and dusting off her pants, until she is presentable once more. She glares at Hannibal with that same defiance that she greeted with him with.

“No, you’re right,” she says mockingly. “Why should you care? But *I* care. And I, as you so helpfully pointed out, am the only one who can free Will.

“But he won’t be free. Not today. Not tomorrow. Not ever. Sometimes sacrifices have to be made.”

And with that, she whirls on her heels and marches upstairs. Hannibal sighs and puts down the knife and follows. He doesn’t want to, but the sounds her marching towards Will’s room and opening the many locks on Will’s door are a siren call he cannot ignore.

As he lingers in the staircase, he hears her confront Will.

“What did you do? Why the hell do I have some creepy, jacked up, pompous guy in my kitchen?”

There’s a rustle of chains; Will moving. “I did nothing. And he isn’t just some creepy, jacked up, pompous guy. You,” Will says, tone thick with delight, “have just met Hannibal, who the Romans called Il Mostro. And from the yelling I heard earlier, you were very rude to him. Just so you know, Hannibal abhors rudeness.”

“Like I care about that. He demanded your freedom, did you know that?”

“He is my husband. It’s only natural for him to ask for that.”

“Yeah, well, it’s only natural for me not to oblige,” Miriam sneers. “You’re mine. By law. No monster can save you.”

Silence falls at her pronouncement. Hannibal digs his fingers into the railing until it cracks under the pressure. He reminds himself not to interfere, for the laws prevent him. And he’d likely make it worse if Miriam realized he was still here.

“Get on the bed and open your mouth,” Miriam orders, back to her smug, self-righteous self. “I have a case to solve, and you know what to do. And you’re going to do it all night long until I let you stop.”

The sounds of Will – muffled though they are by Miriam and the walls and the distance – are pure torture.

Hannibal forces himself to listen to each and every moment of his beloved’s torment, and with each passing second, he lets the hunger he laid upon Miriam build in strength.

Miriam comes back down the stairs a few hours later. She’s changed into a robe and soft pajamas, and with her hair loose and wet around her shoulders from the shower, she looks young and innocent.

Or she would, if she wasn’t leading Will behind her on a leash.

Hannibal steps half into shadow, concealing himself, so that he will not further agitate her. Miriam ignores the food he so graciously cooked for her and rummages through the fridge until she emerges with what looks and smells like three day old takeout, which she pops onto a plate and shoves unceremoniously into the microwave. Then she goes back to the living room, where she cracks open a laptop and starts typing up something.

Will, still bound to her by the leash and mouth still wet, settles on the floor at her side when she glares at him, kneeling with ill grace.

His gaze also flickers over to Hannibal. He tilts his head in silent question.

Hannibal smiles at him. *Do you doubt me so easily, my love?*

Will reads him as easily as he always has, and thus turns to smirk down at the carpet. He’s seen Hannibal’s power before; more than once, as when Hannibal has sat on his throne and delivered judgment, he did so with Will lounging at his side or, on one memorable occasion, perched on his lap.

From the look on Will’s face, he’s remembering that occasion too.

But alas, this is not the time for a repeat. Instead, Will closes his eyes and falls into meditation, unbothered by Miriam muttering to herself or the frantic typing on the keyboard.

Hannibal does not close his eyes, but he also leans against the wall and settles in for the wait. He won't leave Will, after all.

And he is indeed very curious how Miriam's hunger will manifest itself.

Miriam consumes the takeout on her plate in short order, and then two sodas, guzzling them down like she hasn't had anything to eat in hours. With her career, it's very possible, and she does not find it strange.

An hour later, she rises and drags Will into the kitchen, where she pulls out yet more takeout – even older and smellier – and eats that too.

Thirty minutes later, with her eyes dragging due to the late hour, she makes two pots of coffee and drinks them both.

And Hannibal watches, and waits, and smiles.

Two days later, Miriam Lass is almost unrecognizable. Gone is the pressed suit and neatly tied hair and shiny shoes. Discarded is the air of authority and smugness and superiority. No, with her red eyes and disheveled hair, she looks more like a wild animal that hasn't slept.

Because she hasn't.

Instead, Miriam's been glued to her laptop, cracking case after case, researching murder after murder, sending email after email. Her fridge is a wasteland after she's ravaged it for quick and easy meals, and her coffee pot is, perhaps, beyond salvation after being fired up so many times in quick succession. Not that she's eaten in the last twelve hours anyways, too focused on her work to even reach a hand into the cereal box on the table.

She's even dropped Will's leash, allowing him to sit near where Hannibal still lurks, invisible to mortal eyes. She has, unfortunately, forced Will to service her again, but only once, and it was only a few minutes before she pushed him away to focus again.

Will watches her with the kind of fascination Hannibal imagines a scientist might examine a tiny ant. "She needs to use the bathroom," he observes, watching Miriam squirm.

"She did drink a lot of coffee," Hannibal says agreeably.

Satisfaction fills Will's face. "It'll be nice to watch her dash for it." Because that's what has happened the last few times – Miriam has squirmed and fidgeted until she could hold it no longer, and then she finally runs at top speed there and back.

"If she dashes for it," Hannibal says.

Miriam squirms a little bit more. She begins to rise, defeat and shame warring on her face – and then her laptop goes *ding* as she gets an email, and she immediately sits back down, all thoughts of relieving herself gone. She starts hammering out a reply, presumably having finally found the puzzle piece she needs for some case or another.

And then Hannibal smells it: the distinctive odor of human urine.

Will, less sensitive to scent but no less observant, wrinkles his nose and leans away from the puddle Miriam is making.

“That took less time than I thought,” Hannibal says.

“She’s not even flinching, though.”

“She will,” Hannibal reassures his beloved, kissing Will gently. “She will.”

After four days, the house stinks of urine and trash and food left out to spoil. Miriam runs out of dishes and utensils, so she resorts to paper plates and plastic cups. She drinks through her coffee supply and ends up doing energy shots instead. She switches to a new chair when the old one begins to creak alarmingly due to treatment she’s put it through.

And all the while, Hannibal turns up the hunger.

Slowly, though. Very slowly. The best way to boil an animal alive, after all, is to ensure that it doesn’t realize until the last minute that it is boiling.

By day seven, Miriam has pissed off her coworkers, as she hasn’t gone into work. She’s also been blacklisted from all the delivery services, since she won’t even get up to answer the door and they – wisely after sticking their head in – won’t come inside to deliver. Her entire house smells absolutely foul and Miriam is growing desperate.

She’s starving and she knows she is, but she has no food. Or at least, no food that’s easily accessible, since she refuses to touch Hannibal’s sweetbread, which he thoughtfully kept from spoiling for her.

Well, part of it, anyways. Will got bored about three days in and started eating most of the sweetbread, and Hannibal hadn’t the heart to stop him. His beloved needs nourishment anyways.

Will is currently lounging on the couch, watching mindless television. He’s still a bit tense, but Miriam hasn’t so much as looked at him since they came downstairs. She’s too driven to keep working, working, working, and she’s too proud to figure out why she can’t stop.

Too proud or too stubborn, anyways.

And then, just as the clock ticks over to day eight, Hannibal sees what he’s been waiting for: Miriam casts a quick glance, full of indecision and consideration, at her arm.

He drops a quick kiss to Will’s head and a reassuring caress. “I’ll be right back,” he promises his beloved.

Then he strides into the kitchen, where he finds a suitable cast iron pan. It’s covered in unmentionable things, so after a quick detour to the sink and a bit of scrubbing, he sets it onto

the stove and begins heating it up. He also locates a knife – not the best quality, but it's sturdy and long and large enough for what he needs, so it'll do after some sharpening.

Hannibal comes back into the living room just as Miriam mouths absentmindedly at her wrist. A nibble, really, but she leaves blood in the wake her teeth.

"This might help you," he says, offering the knife.

She takes it with a distracted murmur and goes back to typing.

Hannibal checks the pan – it is steaming hot, perfectly ready – and comes back into the living room. A new odor has joined the foul melody: fresh, rich, coppery blood.

As Will watches in fascinated horror, Hannibal obligingly holds out the heated cast iron pan and Miriam drops her own fingers into it. The pan sizzles as the meat hits the surface; Hannibal moves the pan to shake around the meat, so that they cook evenly, but they're so small that they don't require that much time. In only a few minutes, they're ready.

Hannibal tips the pan over the least dirty of the paper plates and watches in satisfaction as Miriam consumes her own fingers, chewing around and spitting out the bones like they're chicken wings.

She doesn't even seem to notice, beyond the satisfied sigh she lets out when she's finished. That's her hunger sated, it seems.

For now.

Hannibal heads back to the kitchen to keep the pan hot. He has a feeling he'll need it.

Sure enough, only a few hours later, Miriam takes the knife and hacks off her left hand. It takes a few blows, since she's inexperienced with breaking bone, but the pain in her limb seems secondary to the gnawing hunger in her belly, for she doesn't hesitate even when blood spurts over her cheek. She merely wipes it aside and continues slicing.

Hannibal once again obligingly presents the hot pan for her, and when the scent of sizzling meat hits her, she finally looks up.

All of the color drains from her face. "You're – You're not Will," she stutters.

"No, Will is resting," Hannibal says. "But you looked like you needed a helping hand, and so I stepped in. Salt is by your right hand, by the way, if you'd wish to use it. Pepper too."

As if in a daze, Miriam reaches for the salt shaker. Hand trembling, she shakes it over her own flesh.

"You'll need more than that," Hannibal chides. "Unless you particularly enjoy unseasoned meat."

“That’s – that’s.” Miriam swallows hard, staring down at the pan’s contents like it contains the answers to the universe – and not in a good way. “That’s my – my hand.”

“Yes, it is. You were hungry.”

Tears fill Miriam’s eyes, spilling down onto her cheeks. Unfortunately for her, Hannibal is both unaffected by the display and more focused on ensuring the meat sears properly. He flips it a few times, checking the meat, before he judges it cooked thoroughly and slides her mutilated hand onto the plate that is still littered with the remnants of her finger bones.

“I can’t,” Miriam sobs, even as her right hand creeps forward, “I can’t, I can’t!”

Hannibal hums. “Actually, it seems that you can.”

Miriam cries the whole time. It takes her a while to consume her whole hand, since she keeps stopping to try and vomit. But the power of her empty stomach calls to her, so nothing comes back up even when she tries to force herself. And when the entire hand is gone, she looks up at Hannibal with big eyes.

“What did you do to me?” she weeps.

“Nothing much. You were very enthralled with the power of a Muse, and also very successful. I was curious to see how far you’d rise on the power of an Endless. You’ve done magnificently. Look at the cases you’ve cracked,” Hannibal says, nudging her mouse over to the folder in her email labeled *Solved*. “Very well done, Agent Lass.”

“But I – I’m still – I’m still so hungry!”

“Yes. It seems even the fame Will brought you was not enough. You needed more. And with my power, you’ll have it all.”

Miriam’s stomach rumbles. Hannibal smiles.

“Well, after you’ve eaten and gotten your strength back up. Let me go and heat up the pan again, shall I?”

“No! No, stop, please!” Miriam begs him, reaching for him with her still bleeding stump. She bursts into tears all over again when she realizes that there is no hand attached to the stump. “Please, stop this!”

Hannibal looks at her. “No,” he says simply. “You wanted to solve cases all night long. I have given you that power. You should be thankful.”

“But – But my – my *hand* – ”

“Sometimes, sacrifices need to be made, do they not?”

Hannibal heats up the pan in the kitchen, ignoring Miriam’s hitching sobs. They pitch higher as he returns, and as he enters the living room, he sees that she has sent another email and

now is sawing the knife slowly across her forearm. The pain is getting to her, now, and she struggles as she tries to separate muscle from bone, forming a very jagged cut.

Hannibal could help her. He could make the cut clean as a ruler, and chop the limb off in one blow.

He thinks of Will's jagged scar, however, and does not.

Miriam catches sight of him and lurches to her feet. Her starved state means that she staggers, though, so she just ends up falling to her knees, tears and blood mixing upon the detritus on the soiled floor.

"Please! Please stop! I'll – I'll do anything, just make me stop!" she cries.

"And why would I do that?" Hannibal asks. "I thought you wanted a life of glory and success. You're on your way, Agent Lass, why stop now?"

"My hand! My arm! Please!"

"Agents get hurt in the line of duty all the time," Hannibal says dismissively. "Who's to say you wouldn't have lost them in the future? At least this way, the meat won't go to waste, and the knife is sanitary, so you won't get an infection from it."

Miriam gulps for air. She's clearly gathering her strength, and so Hannibal is only a little bit surprised when she grabs for him.

"Please," she says, "I'll do anything! Anything, I swear, just stop, please!"

"Anything?"

She shrieks as her humerus cracks under her assault. "Anything!" she swears.

Hannibal smiles. At long last, she is finally, finally ready. He leans down until their eyes meet, so that she can stare into his gaze and know that she has trifled with powers beyond anything she could have possibly understood, and is thrilled when she flinches backwards.

"You already know what I want, Agent Lass," he tells her. "You can unburden yourself at any time."

Miriam is not so far gone to misunderstand him. Her eyes flick to Will, draped over the sofa and watching them with undisguised interest.

She wets her lips. "I can't," she says. "I need him, you don't understand, I need his imagination, his power, his – I need him to catch killers."

"Then your arm seems like a worthwhile trade."

Horror fills her face. It's like watching the sun sink below the horizon, leaving only darkness behind – and all the things that wander in the darkness and call it home. Hannibal cannot

deny the satisfaction at her realization that he will not stop, will not hesitate, will not even take a moment to rest.

Her upper arm falls into the pan with a muted thump. Blood sprays onto the floor. Hannibal takes a handkerchief out of his pocket and wraps it round the wound. She would not bleed out, not under his power, but if all the blood leaked out, then the meat would be less satisfying when she consumed it.

Miriam watches him with hollow, deadened eyes.

Finally, she clears her throat. "What do you want?" she asks dully.

Hannibal repeats, "You already know what I want."

Miriam closes her eyes, tears spilling anew, and turns her face into the mutilated stump of her left arm. She sobs, just once, and then turns to look at Will. Her eyes are bloodshot and wrecked, but they're also filled with feverish determination.

"Will," she says, gesturing at him, and then she corrects herself, "Melpomene."

Will rises in one fluid moment, all grace and fire, prowling forward like a panther. He does not kneel before Miriam, standing tall and proud, and she has to grit her teeth and push herself upwards to catch hold of his leash.

"Melpomene of the Muses," she says, "you were bound to me. Now I, Miriam Lass, release you. You can go. You are free."

The collar snaps, the crack too loud in the otherwise quiet room. It falls with a quiet thump to the floor below, taking the leash with it, and as Will reaches up to rub at his abused skin, Hannibal greedily drinks in the sight of his beloved, at long last free.

Hannibal strides forward, catching Will in his arms when Will staggers, looking shocked.

"I – I'm free," Will says, blinking.

"Yes, my love," Hannibal sighs. He kisses Will's cheek, his forehead, his poor throat. "You are free."

Will lets out a shuddery sigh. "I can't believe it," he whispers.

There's a thud and a clink as Miriam pulls the pan with the arm towards her. Hannibal would ignore her, but she starts talking, loudly, so he sighs and turns back to her. Still, he keeps Will in his arms, close by and safe.

Miriam has a feral look on her face. "You said you'd let me go," she says as she salts her own arm. "You said this would end!"

Hannibal says nothing. He waits until she has fully salted and seared all sides of her own arm, until the scent of cooked meat saturates the whole room, until she's picked it up with trembling fingers and taken the first bite.

Then he says, “I never said I’d release you. I said I would seek justice. You have tortured Will for so long; an arm is only the start of your price.”

Miriam sobs, noisily and pitifully.

Hannibal ignores her. He instead turns back to his beloved.

“Let me take you away, Will,” he urges. “You’re in need of a good bath, a good meal, and a good sleep. I can – ”

“What about her?” Will asks, nodding at Miriam.

“She’ll keep solving cases. Or not. Honestly, I do not care.”

Will sets his jaw, mulish and defiant. “But I do,” he says. “Let her go.”

Sometimes, Hannibal reflects, his husband really is too kind to mortals. “Will,” he tries to protest.

“Let her go, Hannibal. She tortured me. She humiliated me. She harmed me. You sought justice first because I was unable to – now I am able. So let me.”

And with a plea like that, what can Hannibal do? He looks into Will’s eyes, shining with determination and defiance, and he sighs. He kisses his beloved, replacing the stink and taste of Miriam with his own, and then lets the hunger release its deadly claws from Miriam with a wave of his hand.

Miriam immediately drops her half eaten arm. She retches up what little she can and pushes the pan away, backing up she hits the wall, still hiccupping with distress.

“Thank you,” she sobs. “Thank you.”

But Will – Will slips out of Hannibal’s arms, and he prowls forward, and he kneels down in front of her, glorious and incandescent with power. He’s practically shining, and if Hannibal can’t look away, neither can Miriam.

“Don’t thank him,” Will says in amusement. “I didn’t have him let you go for your sake. No. I have my own justice to deal out. You did so admire my power and my imagination, after all.

“So, tell me: did you ever hear of the tragedy of Miriam Lass?”

And as horror fills Miriam’s gaze, Hannibal settles himself on the couch to watch. His beloved always does put on the finest plays, after all.

They take Miriam away on a stretcher. Even under sedation, she weeps, tears streaking down her face like raindrops on a windowsill. If Hannibal felt any kind of pity towards her, he might weep too, for Will wove a masterful tragedy for her life story.

But he does not.

So, as the paramedics and the police and the reporters gather around, Hannibal puts on his crown of bone and blood, and he starts to whisper.

“She was so hungry she consumed her own flesh,” he tells the paramedic, who wraps the stump of her arm with a queasy look.

“She was so obsessed with work that she neglected her health,” he tells the police officer, who holds a gloved hand firmly over their nose as they poke through the soiled, stinking mess of Miriam’s house.

“She hungered for fame so much that she worked herself to the bone,” he tells the reporter, who scribbles it all down with a gleam in her eyes.

By the time he is done, the story of Miriam Lass has taken on a whole new life, and dozens of people are hungry to learn more about her. She will awaken, he knows, to vultures where she once had friends, and will spend hours in psychological evaluation before she is politely but firmly dismissed, her badge revoked and her gun removed and her access cut.

When he returns to Will’s side, Will is watching the chaos unfold with a faint smile.

“You haven’t lost your touch,” Will says, a faint note of admiration in his voice. “The tragedy of Miriam Lass is evolving even beyond my dreams.”

“They were already hungering for information,” Hannibal demurs. “I merely added a little fuel.”

“You did more than that.” Will nods to the red-headed reporter. “That one is about two seconds away from sleeping with that officer to gain inside information.”

Hannibal hums. If Will can see that far, then either the reporter or the officer is due for a tragic end after their coupling. Not that Hannibal really cares, but he finds it reassuring that Will can see that much. It means that his power is not fully lost, even if it is gravely weakened after decades of abuse.

Then he frowns. “Are you not cold, beloved?”

He does not wait for Will to reply – he can see the faint shivers in the cool wind. Even though Will is a Muse and cannot really die so long as believers exist, he can still be hurt. Hannibal puts his hands out and weaves the strands of time and space together, twisting them until they shimmer into life as cloth, which he drapes lovingly but loosely around Will.

It is not nearly the kind of fabric Will used to wear or what he deserves, but it is a start.

Will fingers the shimmering fabric, eyeing the cloth as a man eyes an animal he has never seen. “It’s so strange,” he murmurs. “I have not worn clothes in so long. I did not realize I was missing them.”

Hannibal allows the anger to rise and fall as he breathes and exhales. There is little point in it now. Miriam has been punished – and by Will’s own hand, no less. All that is left is to turn his energy towards taking care of Will.

“We can find you more suitable clothing later,” he says. “Have you reclaimed your knife and scroll?”

“For the scroll, I must wait until I can light a fire near my stream,” Will says. “But my knife . . .”

He flips the blade between them, narrowly missing Hannibal. It is sharp and gleaming in under the sun, dangerous and beautiful. Hannibal breathes a sigh of relief when he hears it; if Will has his knife, then he is indeed a free Muse again, able to go where he pleases and do what he wishes.

As they load Miriam into the ambulance and shut the doors, Will asks, “So what now, Hannibal?”

Hannibal hesitates. He knows what he wants – but Will, darling, dearest, beloved Will, does not always bend to what Hannibal wants. And that is what he loves about him.

“What, no long speech?”

“I had hoped,” Hannibal says carefully, “that you might return to my realm with me. You are in need of many things, but among them a good bath, a good rest, and a good meal. All of those I can provide to you, and I should. You are my husband, after all.”

Will gazes at him with serious eyes, still as a deer that has caught side of a lion. “Yes, you are my husband,” he affirms. “My husband who let our daughter walk into death, and did not stop her.”

Hannibal winces. “It was a mistake.”

“It was. But you did not know that then. I hope you have learned it now.”

“You gave me . . . ample time to reflect upon my mistakes. And I do not make mistakes a second time.”

“I do hope not. Because the next time you let a child of ours die, Hannibal . . .” Will flips the knife up again, hilt over blade, letting the sunlight flash in both of their eyes. He smiles, cold and fey and dangerous, and leans close, close enough that he could slit Hannibal’s throat in a second if he desired. “The next time, Endless or not, I *will* obliterate you. Do you understand me, Hunger?”

“I understand you perfectly, Melpomene,” Hannibal says, bowing his head.

Then the beginning of Will’s sentence sinks in.

“Next time?”

Will tucks the blade away and shrugs. “Well. I have missed you,” he says. His tone is casual and fleeting, but his eyes are not, and his stance means that their arms brush when they breathe.

Hannibal thinks about it, for a moment. Not just being allowed to bring Will back to his home, not just being allowed to bathe Will and wash away the stench of humanity and its crimes, not just being allowed to make the finest meals and feed Will until he at last is full again – but to hold Will close, and kiss him, and to find pleasure between Will’s legs again until his stomach swells with life once more, a perfect, beautiful child for both of them to raise and cherish and protect –

“Will – ” Hannibal begins.

“I take it back, I want no speeches,” Will says, and he pushes Hannibal against the stone gate of Miriam’s garden. “Right here, right now, husband, prove to me that you still want me.”

“Will, how could you ever have doubted?”

“Then love me,” Will demands, eyes gleaming with the power only a Muse can muster, and Hannibal feels his own power rising up in answer until the shadows swallow them both, until their crowns clash upon their heads, until their bodies fit in perfect symphony. “Love me as I am owed, Hannibal, damn you, harder – ”

“*Will*,” Hannibal says helplessly, and does as he is bid.

“I want to go after Kade Prurnell,” Will announces, after they have moved their furious love making to Hannibal’s palace. The venom in his voice is at odds with how he is tenderly stroking his stomach, where their newest child now sleeps, but Hannibal – who remembers well how vicious Will got as his last pregnancy advanced – is not surprised.

Nor is he opposed, really. Miriam only tortured Will for a few years. Kade Prurnell tortured him for decades.

“May I watch?” Hannibal asks.

“Asking instead of demanding? You have learned,” Will teases, and laughs when he frowns.

“Yes, of course you can come. I have a special tragedy planned for Kade Prurnell, and your . . . special talents will be very helpful.”

Hannibal has to kiss him for that. “Then lead the way, my love.”

Epilogue

Chapter Summary

Will gets revenge on Kade.

Chapter Notes

WARNINGS: Kade gets to chow on her own leg, so there's that. Also, more reference to mpreg.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Epilogue

Kade wakes up in a chair, which is strange. She's dressed in a beautiful gown, blue and sparkly and expensive. Earrings chime gently when she moves her head. Rings glitter on her fingers and a necklace lies cold on her neck.

It's nothing she would wear at home.

She blinks. Her head feels heavy and thick, like it's been stuffed with cotton. When she moves to wipe her eyes, she finds that her hands are tied to the chair; she has enough room to reach the utensils on the table in front of her, but no more.

She looks up – and her mouth falls open.

The table is set to the most sumptuous feast she has ever seen. Every single inch of it is covered in food, fragrant and inviting and beautifully laid out. The chandelier she rarely uses glitters overhead; candles she never lights are scattered around the hall; and the expensive china she never polishes is lovingly laid out on the table.

There are three place settings.

A memory returns to her. A phone call, gruff and short. Jack Crawford, asking if she had heard from Miriam Lass lately. A whispered conversation about the hospitalized agent.

A quickly booked ticket far away, a half packed suitcase, a car running in the driveway.

As footsteps echo down the hall, Kade struggles against her bindings. Unfortunately for her, her captors have not only tied her wrists to the chair, but also bound her legs and even secured her chest. Unless she's willing to gnaw off her own arm, she can't escape.

Kade Prurnell looks up and into the face of Melpomene.

“Hello, Kade,” Will says, light and airy, as if they’re old friends. “It’s nice to see you again.”

He is no longer nude and collared and bound. No, he stands tall and proud and *free*, exactly as Kade had feared, dressed in a gorgeous shimmering fabric wrapped round his torso in the style of a chiton, curls tumbling about his face and eyes shining in the light. A small crown of fresh flowers rests atop his head. He is as ethereal and otherworldly as he was when Kade first bound him.

She swallows. “Hello, Will. I see Miriam released you.”

“Yes. She did.”

Will offers no explanation of how he got free. Kade does not ask. She read the report Jack forwarded to her, and she knows the limits placed on Will’s power when he was bound. Clearly, something happened.

Or someone.

“Our apologies for the restraints,” Will says, nodding at the ropes. “We didn’t want to take any chances. I’ve had enough of being bound, after all.”

“A sensible precaution,” Kade says. Then: “We?”

A terrible smile spreads across Will’s face. It’s not the same smile he once mocked her with, or the smile he showed when he saw that the Ripper had been caught, or even the blood-smeared smile he had thrown at her when she had collared him. No, this smile promises agony and blood and a terrible fate in store for her.

Against her will, Kade quivers.

“Yes, we,” Will says. He looks to his side, still smiling. “Kade Prurnell, may I introduce my husband?”

A man steps out of the shadows, then, coming to Will’s side. He’s dressed in an elegant suit, plaid and a blood red tie, and he presses an adoring kiss to Will’s hand before he tucks it in his elbow, like a highborn gentleman.

He is also, Kade realizes with dawning horror, the god damned Chesapeake Ripper.

Yet Will is still talking. “This is my husband,” Will says, something sweet and besotted on his face. “Hunger of the Endless, Lord of Feasts and Master of Famines, Il Mostro. My dear Hannibal.”

Kade opens her mouth. Closes it. Opens it again. “He’s the god damned Ripper!” she exclaims.

“Yes, that too,” Will acknowledges. “Every century he gets a new name. Something of a habit of his.”

“One must keep life interesting somehow,” Hannibal the Chesapeake Ripper says with a shrug.

Kade splutters. “But you – He – You said he *killed* your child! That was why you helped us imprison him.”

Will hums. He tilts his head to the side, gaze thoughtful. “Not quite,” he says, a touch of reprimand in his voice. “I said he let my child die, not that he killed her. You misunderstood me.”

“You didn’t correct me!”

“You were doing what I needed you to do. Why bother to argue over semantics?” Will shrugs. “I was angry at Hannibal, but he served his time in prison. And I should hope that he has *learned his lesson* about winding up our children and watching them go.”

Hannibal the god damned Chesapeake Ripper dips his head, as if chastened. “Yes, my dear,” he says, in a tone that on anyone else Kade would call meek.

“There, see. All things ended well,” Will says, patting at his husband’s hand in satisfaction.

Kade looks from Will to Hannibal and back to Will. Even without Will’s power to guide her, she can still clearly read the affection between them – they stand so close that they are almost one, their bodies turned to each other like flowers to the sun, and when they are not looking at Kade, they are looking at each other, fondness and adoration in their gaze.

They are truly in love.

“You’re insane,” Kade says flatly, because it’s the only thing she can say.

That draws Hannibal’s attention, at long last. His eyes snap to Kade, and they are as cold as the winter wind. He looks like he wants nothing more than to tear her apart, shred by shred, bone by bone, until she is nothing but a puddle of blood.

“Do not,” Hannibal says, each syllable weighted with power, “insult my beloved. You’ve already done enough to him.”

Kade trembles.

“And that’s why we’re here today,” Will says brightly. “To make amends. You do want to make amends, don’t you, Kade? Because if not – ”

“I do,” she says hastily, because she can read a room. Besides, she can always escape later.

She still remembers how to bind Will, after all.

Will beams. “Excellent.”

Hannibal pulls out the chair on Kade’s left side. He helps Will into it like he’s a delicate teacup, guiding him with gentle hands and pushing him in only after checking twice to see if

he's seated. It's a chivalrous display that wouldn't be out of place in a medieval romance, Kade thinks.

"I need to check on the roast," Hannibal announces. He caresses Will's cheek, every inch the devoted husband. "I'll return shortly."

If Kade's nose is to be believed, then the roast is almost ready. Certainly the entire room is filled with the aroma of rich spices and seared meat. If she wasn't sure that this dinner would be her last, she might even be actually hungry.

Instead, she forces herself to turn to Will. Clearly there are things he wishes to say to her alone.

"I saw the suitcase," Will says, tone as mild as though they were discussing the weather. "I take it you know what happened to Miriam, then."

"I know where Miriam ended up," Kade corrects. "I have no idea what you did to her."

"I did nothing," Will tells her.

"So it was your . . . husband, then."

"Hannibal never laid a finger upon Miriam. The Endless generally do not sully their hands with humanity. Or, at least, not most of them. Harbinger has a more gentle touch. But humans rarely will wait for a helping hand when hunger comes knocking."

Kade blinks. "He's not a Muse?"

Will laughs. It's strange; she never heard him laugh like that, ever. He'd been happy when they had chained Hannibal, but it had been a grim sort of happiness. Now he is seemingly free to be as joyful as a child at play, and his eyes sparkle with fondness as he casts his gaze in Hannibal's wake.

"No," he says, still laughing. "Most definitely not. He is of the Endless, and they predate the Muses."

Kade wracks her brain. She'd studied the mythology of Greeks and Romans to learn how to bind Will, and she'd expanded that knowledge while he'd been leashed to her, but the Endless ring no bells for her. "Is he from another pantheon?"

"In a way. But his pantheon came before all of ours. The Endless were here before the first living thing, and they'll be here long after the last dying thing."

"But they have laws, yes?"

"Only the ones they put upon themselves," Will says, and it is an acknowledgement and a warning both. "Do not try to bind Hannibal to your will, Kade. I helped you imprison him because it was the only way an Endless could be bound, but he remained free to do whatever he pleased. You barely could handle the small amount of my power that you wielded; you would crumble trying to handle his."

“Small?” Kade says, because she caught hundreds of killers with his power.

Will’s eyes flash. “Very small,” he says, and his voice is the song of the ocean again, deep and alluring and without end.

Kade could fall into that voice, she knows, and drown without even knowing she was dying.

She bites her cheek, hard, and keeps biting until she bleeds. Sometimes pain is the only way to reassert control after tasting the influence of a being of power. Certainly she had used it to keep her head on straight while Will had knelt between her legs and serviced her to dizzying effect.

Will leans forward, still smiling, as if he means to drown her right here and now – but then Hannibal emerges from the kitchen, bearing a plate as large as a man’s torso, steaming hot and smelling amazing. Will breaks eye contact, and the spell is broken, leaving Kade to slump in her chair and try to catch her back.

“A whole leg, wrapped in banana leaves and slow roasted above the fire,” Hannibal announces, neatly setting the plate down as though it weighs nothing. “Kade, would you like to do the honors?”

Kade looks at the knife he offers her. “You want to give me a weapon?”

“You’re our guest of honor. It is only right that you make the first cut,” Hannibal says, completely unaffected by the threat.

The knife is sharp and gleaming when she takes it. It is the perfect weight – not too heavy, not too light. She wouldn’t trust her aim if she had to throw it, but Hannibal is in the perfect range for a good stab. And maybe he can heal, like Will, but all she needs is a distraction so that she can cut herself free and tackle Will –

She puts her feet on the ground and pushes, just a little, for some leverage. She frowns. The chair doesn’t move as much as she thought. She pushes again, surprised that only foot seems to have contact in the ground.

Kade tsks. “You’ve bound me too tightly, gentlemen. It appears my leg has gone to sleep. That’s not very polite of you.”

Hannibal and Will share a glance. It’s full of weight and meaning, but she cannot divine what they are saying. Either way, after a moment, Hannibal comes around the table, wiping his hands clean on a small towel, and kneels by her chair. His hand is warm and gentle on her thigh, but she flinches all the same.

“No, this is bound correctly,” Hannibal says. “Any looser and you might have bled too much, and this dinner is best conducted with you conscious.”

“My thigh is fine, it’s my foot that – ”

“Your foot seems fine as well.”

A whole leg, wrapped in banana leaves and slow roasted above the fire, Hannibal had said.

She cut off her own arm, looks like, Jack Crawford had told her.

A ball of ice forms in Kade's stomach. All thoughts of rebinding Will or stabbing Hannibal fade away, like mirages in the desert. She puts her feet against the ground and pushes with all her strength, but only one foot obeys her brain's commands.

"Your foot is operating normally. Look for yourself, Kade."

"I – "

Hannibal's voice changes. It's not a lot, but after being around Will for so long, she's attuned to very slight changes. "Look for yourself, Kade," he repeats, and she cannot disobey him.

Kade looks, and sees nothing but a stump where her left leg used to be.

A sound builds in her throat. She's not sure what it is: a wail of grief, a shriek of rage, a scream of disbelief. She wonders if it is what Will felt, when she burned his scroll and stole his knife and wrapped a leather collar around his throat. When she forced him to kneel before her, and channel his gifts into her, and service her whenever she pleased.

Still in that commanding voice, Hannibal says, "Cut the first slice, Kade. As our guest of honor."

Slowly, Kade lifts her gaze from the stump of her mutilated leg to the fragrant roast on the table before her. Slowly, she takes up the knife in her trembling hand and rests it against the meat. And slowly, so slowly, she carves off the first slice, as her eyes burn and her entire body recoils.

Hannibal catches the slice on a plate, obligingly and professional as any server, and sets it in front of her. He even garnishes it with a lemon.

He says something to Will then, or perhaps Will says something to him. Either way, it's all just meaningless noise to Kade. She stares instead at the slice of her own leg in front of her and tries valiantly not to vomit.

Eventually the noise of chewing and swallowing distracts her. She looks up to find Will eagerly setting into his own slice, seemingly not the least bit bothered that he is consuming human flesh. And Hannibal is too busy watching Will with adoration on every inch of his face to even pretend to be stoic.

"You're enjoying this," Kade says numbly. "Eating your enemy."

"Hannibal is an excellent cook," Will replies.

Hannibal makes a demurring noise, as if trying to be humble. "You've not been well fed, my darling. I must feed you up; you're distressingly thin. You'll need your strength."

“We’ll be fine, Hannibal,” Will says, in the tone of someone who has said it many times before. He pauses from tearing at the meat to rub gently over his stomach. “Don’t worry for us.”

Kade wonders, briefly, if he has a stomachache, and she has half a second to be viciously glad of it.

Then the word choice catches up to her. “We?”

Will smiles at her, sunny and joyful, and this time the way he rubs his stomach is slower, gentler, more deliberate. Kade has seen that gesture a thousand times before, from victims to colleagues to family members, and –

“You’re pregnant?” she blurts out.

“Don’t sound so surprised,” Will says. “When two beings who love each other very much make love, it is not surprising that – ”

“He *killed your child!*” Kade shouts, because it bears repeating.

“He let my child die. And he knows that it was wrong and that I will not allow it a second time.”

Kade looks from Will to Hannibal, and finds neither wearing the appropriate expressions. It is in that moment that she is reminded most vividly that they are not human, because in every case Kade remembers where a child died, usually the human parents were driven apart and divorced shortly thereafter.

Apparently, a Muse and an Endless just . . . put one of them in time out for several decades. And then get back together and continue sleeping together.

“You’re insane,” Kade says, shaking her head. “Both of you. I bound you to serve humanity and help catch killers, and that thing killed humans and killed your child, but somehow *I* am the monster?”

Hannibal and Will share another one of those indescribable looks. There’s definitely a question asked and an answer given, because a slow smile breaks out across Hannibal’s face and he stands up, while Will tilts his head, lounging casually in the chair and baring his neck as if playing the role of a coy tease. Hannibal prowls around the table and the shadows in the hall follow him, as if he’s cast off his human mask and let his true power flow, until at last he comes to Will.

Then, surprisingly, he kneels before Will, a suppliant at the altar of a god.

Without taking his eyes off of Will, Hannibal says, “There is a difference between us. As you seem to not comprehend it, I will explain it. You bound Will for selfish reasons, even though you might lie to yourself and pretend it was altruism. You took him away from his home and his family; you made him a slave to you and your will; you forced him to serve you when he

asked to go free. Tell me: what makes you not a monster, Kade Prurnell, for torturing my beloved so?"

"I didn't – "

"He has a scar here, from where you hurt him," Hannibal says, caressing Will's abdomen. "He has a scar inside, from where you broke him to your will. His power itself is scarred, and is only now beginning to recover from your abuse. I think you are the true monster here."

A hot flush fills Kade's cheeks. "I was trying to save lives," she mumbles.

"Yes, Miss Lass said much the same," Hannibal notes, as casually as discussing a bug he had squashed. "And I do not care for those lives, to be honest. I care for my beloved's life, and you hurt him. My Will should be adored, should be venerated, should be worshipped. That is how I treat him. And that is how you should have treated him."

"Let me show you."

Hannibal heaves Will onto the table, clearing a space with a sweep of his arm, seemingly unconcerned by the plates and bowls and utensils that go clattering to the floor. Will slaps at his shoulder and makes to scold him, but Hannibal kisses the protests from his lips.

When Hannibal begins to unwind the chiton from Will as one unwraps a present, Kade averts her eyes.

But escape is not so easily had. "Watch," Hannibal commands, "and see how my beloved should be worshipped."

And against her will, her eyes drag themselves back to the table, to watch as Hannibal finishes parting the fabric from Will's skin. He kisses each new inch of skin, tender and reverent. He caresses his curls and cheeks and hands. He pays special attention to the slight swell of Will's stomach, which is obvious now with the clothes gone.

When he thrusts into Will, the entire table shakes. It's a sturdy table, solid mahogany, and Kade paid a fortune for it – but apparently even it must yield to one of the Endless.

Will and Hannibal claw at each other, drawing blood, and trade furious demands: harder, stronger, faster. More dishes fall to the floor, shattering and spilling their contents. The slick sounds of their love making echo around the hall, until it's the only thing Kade can hear, just as the sight of their writhing bodies is all she can see.

Eventually, when they stop, the table has been moved enough that it presses heavily against Kade's ribs, and she is as bruised as though it was her Hannibal had so energetically set upon.

"I think," Will pants, gleaming golden with sweat, "that Kade has gotten the message, darling."

Hannibal hums and kisses Will again. "I'm not so sure. Perhaps another round?"

"This table is not as comfortable as you think," Will says. "Also, now I'm hungry again."

“Well, that I cannot allow.” Hannibal turns that gaze upon her, a predator to the core, terrifying without even trying. “Kade, would you be so kind as to cut another slice for my beloved? He needs his nourishment for our child.”

Kade cuts another slice. It’s not as neat as her first, but Hannibal makes no protest when he takes the plate from her. He simply starts cutting it into smaller pieces, which he then proffers to Will, humming in satisfaction as Will eats from his hand.

“Don’t forget to eat yourself,” Hannibal says. “We don’t want this meat to go to waste, do we?”

Her tears fall upon her meat as she eats. Perhaps it makes it saltier, but she’s too numb to tell. With every swallow, she wants to retch – but whether from Hannibal’s power or Will’s power or her own terror, nothing comes back up.

In the time it takes her to slowly and painstakingly eat her single slice, Will and Hannibal consume at least half of her leg. They do not separate, remaining intertwined upon her table, still naked and flushed with exertion, and Hannibal only leans a short distance as he retrieves more food to feed to Will – grapes and tarts and apples, fish and ribs and steak, caviar and oysters and truffle. They even share a glass of champagne, passing it back and forth for sips, before at last Will shakes his head and refuses another bite, apparently full.

Then, at last, Hannibal settles Will back into the chair, but he remains standing beside Will, like some kind of guard dog.

Kade wets her lips. She can still taste the grease and spices of the meat. “Are you going to kill me now?” she asks.

“Kill you?” Will repeats, sounding baffled. “Whatever for?”

“For what I did to you.”

Will makes a dismissive sound. “You tortured me for over half a century, Kade. You think you get one meal and we’re even? Not even close.”

“Then what? You let your cannibal husband cook the rest of me for you to dine upon?”

“With your fear and anger making the meat bitter?” Will wrinkles his nose. “No, thank you. Hannibal can find better quality meat to sustain me. No, for you, I have a better idea.

“Tell me: did you ever hear of the tragedy of Kade Prurnell?”

SOMETHING STRANGE IN THE WATER???

LAST WEEK, NOT ONE BUT TWO STARS OF THE FBI HAD TO BE HOSPITALIZED AFTER BEING GRIEVOUSLY INJURED. SOURCES FROM THE HOSPITAL CONFIRM THAT THEY BOTH LOST A LIMB, AND THERE IS THE SUGGESTION THAT THEY ACTUALLY CONSUMED THEIR OWN FLESH.

WHEN ASKED FOR A QUOTE, AGENT JACK CRAWFORD SAID: "I'M TOO OLD FOR THIS CANNIBAL \$&%".*

WHAT COULD HAVE DRIVEN THE OLD ICE QUEEN AND THE YOUNG AGENT LASS TO DO SUCH A THING? FIND OUT IN THE NEXT EDITION OF TATTLECRIME!

FINIS

Chapter End Notes

A/N: Hannibal takes Will back to his palace and treats him royally for the rest of time. Will resumes weaving stories of tragedy in the human world as his husband sends Feasts and Famines to torment humanity. Although sometimes they just have lots of sex all over the palace.

End Notes

A/N: For those confused: Hannibal and Will once had Abigail as their daughter, but Hannibal did as Hannibal does and wound her up and watched her go, and she walked into death and never returned. Will was pretty mad about that, so he inserted himself into a human investigation into the Chesapeake Ripper - one of Hannibal's hobbies is pretending to be a human serial killer when he's bored - and helped Mason Verger trap an Endless to put Hannibal in a time-out. Unfortunately, this brought him under the scrutiny of Kade Prurnell and so Will got bound himself.

ALSO! Also also also! This fic marks my 99th fic which means that my next fic is my 100TH FIC!!! I'm so thrilled to reach this milestone, and I have a [100 Fic Poll](#) on Twitter where you can vote for the prompt XD

Find me @ Telegram/Discord as TheSilverQueen : [Tumblr as thesilverqueenlady](#) : [Twitter as silverqueenlady](#)

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